



Motivation of the faculty members in the politics and administration training: The case of provincial schools of politics in Viet Nam

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Abstract

People are the precious asset of a public organization given its scarce resources and competitiveness of the private sector. Motivated public employees are likely to add values to the services delivery to citizens, private organizations as well as government entities. Faculty members in the state-funded provincial schools of politics and administration in Viet Nam are the key actors in training public administration and politics for local officials who play important role in promoting effective local governance and ensuring no one left behind in the neighbourhood. Therefore, it is crucial to improve the quality of the training and motivate the faculty members involved in the training. The paper aimed to identify the level of motivation and determinants of motivation of the faculty members in the provincial schools of politics and administration in Viet Nam. The research questions to be answered were: (i) what is the level of work motivation of the faculty members of the provincial schools of politics and administration; and (ii) what factors most affect the creating of work motivation for the faculty members. The stakeholder mapping approach allowed to select three groups of people to be surveyed consisting of faculty, school administrators, and provincial public service department officers. The survey took place in 2019 and 2020. The questionnaire respondents totalled 1058. As an additional source of information, fifteen interviews were conducted with ten faculty members and five school administrators. Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure scale reliability and the T-test and Anova compared groups. Work motivation of the faculty members was mainly at the "fair" level; male faculty members were more motivated than female and the faculty members holding doctor degrees were more motivated. A modest number of the surveyed faculty members were highly motivated and very satisfied with their job. The highest influencing factor was the faculty member factor or intrinsic motivation. The research findings could be referred when identifying solutions to create work motivation for the faculty members in the politics and public administration training for local officials whose enhanced capacity is believed to improve public services to the local people, especially in the context of unpredictable changes.

Keywords

Motivation, faculty members, politics and administration training, provincial school of politics, Viet Nam.

Introduction

People are the precious asset of a public organization given its scarce resources and competitiveness of the private sector. Motivated public employees are likely to add values to the service delivery to citizens, businesses, as well as government entities. Motivation is seen as a drive to enhance public employees' readiness to work and productivity, a determinant of performance of not only an individual employee but also their team or unit in which they are placed. Motivation is believed the key to any excellence or success of any efforts of an employee. Therefore, public organizations are seeking measures and tools to motivate their employees.

Provincial schools of politics (PSP) in Viet Nam are the training centres for administration and politics for local elected officials and civil servants who work directly with communities, provide services, and implement policies for the well-being of people. Local elected officials and civil servants play an important role in promoting effective local governance and realizing the goals of sustainable development. Training is not a panacea but a good way to

strengthen local elected officials and civil servants' capacity in local governance and sustainable development. After training local elected officials and civil servants become more capable to identify actual different needs of various groups of the local people and provide them with equal, inclusive access to quality services. They know how to make informed, participatory decisions and ensure no one left behind in the neighbourhood.

Quality of training does matter in enhancing capabilities of local officials. It is the faculty members of PSP who are the key actors in ensuring the quality training for local officials. How to motivate faculty members and maintain them devoted to the public training while the private sector is more attractive in terms of competitive salary, bonuses, promotion, work environment, and other factors is a question managers have to answer.

The paper aimed to identify the expression and determinants of motivation of the faculty members of PSP in Viet Nam. The research questions are: (i) what is the level of the work motivation of the faculty members teaching politics and administration in PSP; and (ii) what factors most influence the creating of work motivation for the faculty members.

The paper consists of three main parts. The literature review and theoretical background provides theoretical issues of which are motivation and creating motivation. The methodology section is followed by the findings. Based on the findings, the paper introduces a discussion, focusing on reasoning of the findings, the challenges for PSP to motivate faculty.

The paper presents a case of how motivation is expressed and how effective motivation measures are applied. The research had practical implications when providing rationales for identification of solutions to create work motivation for the faculty members in the politics and public administration training for local officials whose enhanced capacity is believed to improve public services to the local people, especially in the context of unpredictable changes.

Literature review

Motivation and work motivation

The result of a person's action depends on his/ her ability, the environment in which action takes place, and the reason or stimuli which causes or motivates him/ her act in a particular way. Motivation is examined from different perspectives. There have been more than a hundred of definitions of the word "motivation" mentioned in literature. Motivation, from the physiological part of the definition, "refers to those energizing/ arousing mechanism with relatively direct access to the final common motor pathways, which have the potential to facilitate and direct some motor circuits while inhibiting others" (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1983, p. 272). Mitchell and Daniels (2003, p. 225) described motivation as an internal set of processes which is personal, and goal directed. Motivation is "the forces either within or external to a person that arouse enthusiasm and persistence to pursue a certain course of action" (Daft & Marcic, 2009, p. 444), "to achieve some goals in order to fulfil some need or expectation" (Mullins, 2016, p. 221).

Motivation is categorized into two broad categories which are intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. An intrinsically motivated person performs an activity not for vivid rewards but because of the nature of the activity while extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity for external rewards (Deci, 1972, p. 113). Intrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable and extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it leads to separable outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.55). Intrinsic motivation is considered a strong drive for a person to take a certain course of action.

Work motivation is defined as "a set of energetic forces that originate both within as well as beyond an individual's being, to initiate work-related behaviour and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration" (Pinder, 2008, p.11). Work motivation is a stimulus to drive a person work harder and a reason for voluntary acts to overcome challenges to fulfil the assigned tasks and meet the expectations which an organization places on him/her. Mullins (2016, p. 225) reviewed the motivation to work in a threefold classification which is economic rewards (e.g. pay, fringe benefits, pension rights, materials goods and security), intrinsic satisfaction (the nature of the work itself, interest in the job, personal development) and social relationship (friendship, group working and the desire for affiliation, status and dependency). Employee engagement fosters an environment in which people can

flourish, are more satisfied and motivated, and thrive on work challenge because they feel appreciated by their supervisors and the organization (Daft & Marcic, 2009, p. 472).

Abilities, skills, motivation and the enabling aspects of the environment produce task-relevant behaviours (Mitchell & Daniels, 2003, p. 227). “People’s behaviour is determined by what motivates them [and] their performance is a product of both ability level and motivation: Performance = function (ability x motivation)” (Mullins, 2016, p. 221).

Public service motivation may be understood as an individual’s predisposition to respond to rational, norm-based, and affective motives grounded primarily in public institutions and organizations (Perry & Wise, 1990, p. 368). Individuals pursue particular courses of action within government because of their advocacy for a special interest, a desire to serve the public interests and social equity, or patriotism of benevolence.

Theories of motivation and Herzberg’s two-factor theory

Creating work motivation has been a research topic of numerous studies from different perspectives. Daft and Marcic (2009, p. 445) categorized employee motivation into four distinct perspectives that are “the traditional approach, the human relations approach, the human resource approach, and the contemporary approach” (which is divided into content theories, process theories, reinforcement theories).

Early management theories such as Taylor’s Scientific Management Theory which suggested financial compensation impels motivation and performance; personality and learning theories which emphasized the enhancement of performance by creating organizational conditions that matched need satisfaction with on-task efforts (Wiley, 1995, p. 263). While Hawthorn studies suggested that noneconomic rewards seemed more important than money as a motivator of work behaviour, human resource theory posited that employees are complex and motivated by many factors, e.g. McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y argued that people want to do a good job and that work is natural and healthy as play (Daft & Marcic, 2009, p. 446).

According to Mullins (2016), content theories of motivation include Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, Alderfer’s modified need hierarchy model, Nohria’s four drives model of motivation, Herzberg’s two-factor theory, and McClelland’s achievement motivation theory. He argued that while content theories place emphasis on the nature of needs and what motivates, process theories are concerned more with the actual process of motivation and how behaviour is initiated, directed, and sustained. Accordingly, the process theories include expectancy-based models of Vroom, and Porter and Lawler, equity theory of Adams, goal theory of Locke, attribution theories of Heider and Kelley.

The reinforcement approach to employee motivation looks at the relationship between behaviour and its consequences (Daft & Marcic, 2009). Skinner’s Operant Learning and Reinforcement Theory emphasized that workplace behaviour modification enhanced job performance, that work environments promoting a sense of achievement, the perception of competence, and autonomy strengthened employee motivation (Wiley, 1997).

Herzberg’s two-factor theory

Herzberg’s two-factor theory focused on the link between motivation, job design, and satisfaction. It suggested that motivation is composed of two largely unrelated, job-related dimensions, which are hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction but do not promote growth and development and motivator factors that encourage growth (Wiley, 1997). Under Herzberg theory, those satisfied with both motivation and hygiene factors would be the top performers in the organization and those dissatisfied with both factors would be poor performers (Teck-Hong & Waheed, 2011).

Hygiene is “used as analogous to the medical term meaning preventive and environmental” and “hygiene factors are necessary to avoid unpleasantness at work and to deny unfair treatment” (Mullins, 2016, p. 232). Hygiene factors are basically concerned with work environment. Accordingly, hygiene or maintenance factors are working conditions, supervision, pay, company policies, and interpersonal relationship and are extrinsic motivation. They include feelings brought by the work; work practices; tasks required and the feelings during the task implementation; interactions among co-workers and supervisors; physical work conditions e.g. equipment, noise, temperature, amount of work required and available amenities; the sense of having a secure job (Herzberg, Mausener, & Snyderman, cited in Busatlic & Mujabasic, 2018). Their absence leads to employee dissatisfaction. However, “they do not themselves cause people to become highly satisfied and motivated in their work” (Daft & Marcic, 2009, p. 451).

Motivators are variables that actually motivate employees and are related to what they are allowed to do and the quality of experience at work. The motivators are concerned with job content (Mullins, 2016). Motivators include achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and opportunity for growth are intrinsic motivation. Achievement includes different feelings or situations which comprise successful or unsuccessful accomplishment of work, resolving certain problems and seeing the outcome of one's efforts (Herzberg, Mausener, & Snyderman, cited in Busatlic & Mujabasic, 2018). Providing meaningful work influences employee's motivation (DeCenzo, Robbins, & Verhulst, 2016) and satisfaction with the work itself is considered the most important factor of job satisfaction (Herzberg et al, cited in Hullin & Judge, 2003). Motivator factors influence job satisfaction and "when motivators are absent, workers are neutral to work, but when motivators are present, workers are highly motivated and satisfied" (Daft & Marcic, 2009, p. 451). Represented by the growth, achievement, recognition, and other elements employee needs, "motivators are the real sources of stimulation and motivation for employees" (Rainey, Fernandez, & Malatesta, 2021, p. 266).

Context of the provincial schools of politics in Viet Nam

Viet Nam is a unitary country that has a central government and three-layer local governments consisting of provincial, district, and commune governments. The country is divided into 63 provincial-level administrative units. A provincial school of politics was established in 1994 in each province to provide local elected officials and civil servants with political and administration training courses, foster and upskill them. Provincial school of politics do not provide academic degree training and do not belong to the national education system.

There are 63 PSP nationwide, with total staff of more than three thousand employees including about two thousands of faculty members teaching politics and administration and other courses. The provincial schools of politics provide training to local elected officials and civil servants on politics and administration, public policies and laws, governance, local organizations, and other knowledge and skills needed to fulfil their duties.

One of the key target groups of their training are the elected officials and civil servants working in grassroots level governments, the closest level to people and in charge of the socio-economic development in the neighbourhood. These elected officials and civil servants are diverse in age, background of profession and work experience and possess rich practical knowledge. Politics and administration training is the key program of the provincial schools of politics. From 2009 to 2020, about 16,000 courses on politics and administration were organized with participation of 130,000 local elected officials and civil servants (Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics, 2021).

Faculty members in PSP are public employees, governed by the Law on Public Employees. They have a differentiated status from the faculty members in other training institutions in their special job characteristics and goals. They have to implement training functions of the provincial school of politics which aim to provide both theoretical and practical knowledge and skills related to the work environment of their students who are holding positions in the local governments and local organizations. Their job goals align with the training goals of the school which aim at making trainees who are local practitioners capable to apply the learnt knowledge and skills into their work to solve the local problems and produce well-informed, participatory decisions.

Theoretical framework

Herzberg's two-factor theory proves its endurance in the contemporary research on how to motivate people in organisations. Given the characteristics of the faculty members of PSP and the schools, participants of their training who are local officials and in charge of local socio-economic development, and interact with people daily, the politics and administration training, Herzberg's Theory of two factors was used as a fundamental theoretical framework for this case study on motivation of the faculty members of PSP in Viet Nam. Herzberg's two-factor theory helps identify the level of job satisfaction of the faculty members and what factors influence their work motivation.

Work motivation was expressed in terms of interest in the job and engagement at work. Interest in the job, an expression of work motivation, was examined through job satisfaction and task performance. Engagement at work was surveyed through adaptation at work, task implementation, and probability to change the job.

Factors influencing work motivation of the faculty members in PSP were categorized into three groups for examination which were faculty member factors as intrinsic factors, work factors as motivators, and organization factors as maintenance factors (see Table 1).

Table 1: Factors influencing work motivation

Maintenance factors	Motivators	
Organization factors	Work factors	Intrinsic factors: Faculty member factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working condition • Workplace atmosphere • Balance between work and life • Incentives and treatment • Personnel policy • Evaluation policy • Fair task assignment • Support from school leaders • School leadership • Supervisor's management • Organizational culture • Opportunity for career development • Opportunity for recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful job • Challenging job • Goals and development strategy of the school • Learning attitude of course participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for advancement (evolution) • Recognition of the organization and peers • Interest in the job

The factors influencing the creation of work motivation consisted of faculty member factors and organization environment factors (see Table 2).

Table 2: Factors influencing the creation of work motivation

No.	Subjective factors	Objective factors
	Faculty member factors	Organization environment factors
1	Thinking positively	Existing regulations on provincial schools of politics
2	Overcoming difficulties	Impacts of international integration
3	Setting goals for personal development	Legislation on public employees
4	Making detailed plans for the set objectives	Training programs for local officials
5	Recognizing job progress	Superior agencies
6	Valuing job achievements	Local peculiarities
7	Setting new challenges to overcome	
8	Mobilizing job resources	

Research design and methodology

The paper aimed to identify the expression and determinants of motivation of the faculty members in PSP in Viet Nam.

Research questions

The paper aims to answer the following research questions: (1) what is the level of the work motivation of the faculty members teaching in politics and administration in PSP; and (2) what factors most influence the creating of work motivation for the faculty members.

Research hypotheses

H1: The faculty members have low work motivation.

H2: Male faculty members are more motivated than female and those faculty members holding doctorate degrees are more motivated.

H3: The faculty member factors as intrinsic factors are the highest influencing factors in creating work motivation for the faculty members.

Research design

The stakeholder mapping approach allowed to select four groups of people to be surveyed consisting of faculty members, school administrators, and representatives from the provincial departments of home affairs which were in charge of state management of local officials (see Table 3 for characteristics of respondents). Accordingly, four separate questionnaires were designed for these four groups, focusing on motivation of the faculty members and creating work motivation for the faculty. The questionnaires were tested with a number of faculty members from different PSP before the survey. The survey was conducted in 2019 and 2020. The total number of questionnaire respondents was 1058 including 684 faculty members, 356 school administrators, and 18 representatives of the provincial departments of home affairs in charge of state management of local officials. In addition to the questionnaires, 45–60-minute unstructured interviews with ten faculty members and five school administrators were conducted. The total interviews were 15.

Research methods

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to test the hypotheses. The items within the questionnaire were measured on a five-point Likert scale. Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure scale reliability (see Appendix) and the T-test and One-way Anova compared groups. Unstructured interviews with the faculty members and school administrators provided explanation and further information to the questionnaires results and clarified information that could not be stated in the questionnaires. The interviews were reported.

Results

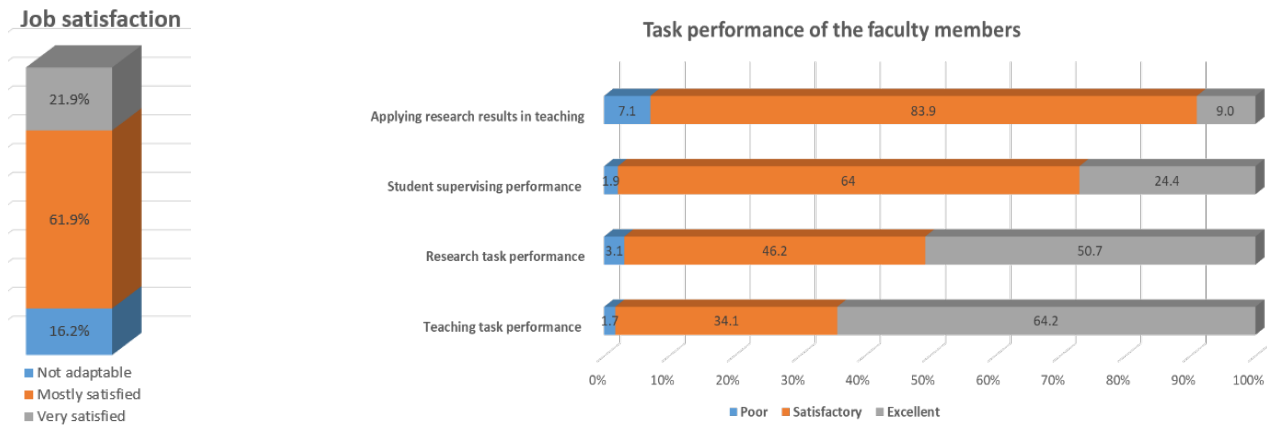
Work motivation of the faculty members

More than a half of them (68.0%) were fairly motivated while only a very small percentage of the surveyed faculty members had low work motivation (2%) and more than a tenth of them had high work motivation (11.2%).

Work motivation was expressed in terms of interest in the job and engagement at work. Interest in the job was surveyed through job satisfaction and task performance (see Figure 1.).

The low percentage of excellent performance in applying research results in teaching was explained in the unstructured interviews with the faculty members that it was partly due to irrelevance of the research results with the teaching context, poor capacity of application of research results in teaching, and poor supervision of this task.

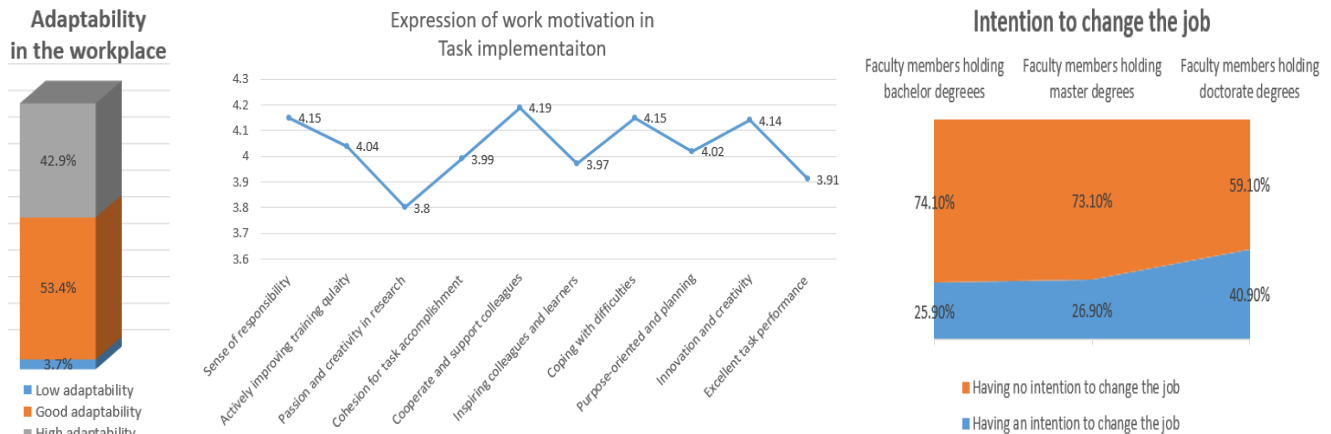
Figure 1: Interest in the job



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Engagement at work was surveyed through adaptability in the workplace, task implementation, and probability to change the job (see Figure 2).

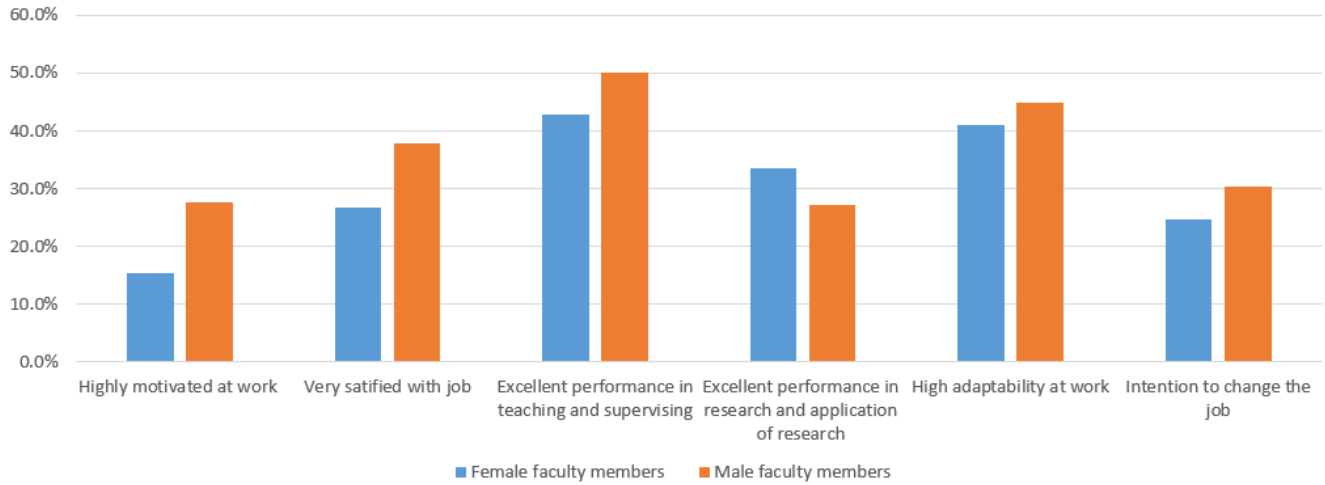
Figure 2: Engagement at work



Faculty’s work motivation was most expressed through cooperation with and support for colleagues, sense of responsibility, coping with difficulties, and innovation and creativity. There is a significant difference ($sig < 0.05$) among school administrators and faculty, male and female faculty members in expression of work motivation except the cooperation with and support for colleagues and innovation and creativity in teaching and supervising learners. There is no significant difference ($sig. > 0.05$) among master faculty members and doctor faculty members in term of expression of the work motivation. Less than a fifth (16.7%) of the surveyed faculty members mentioned the probability to change the job.

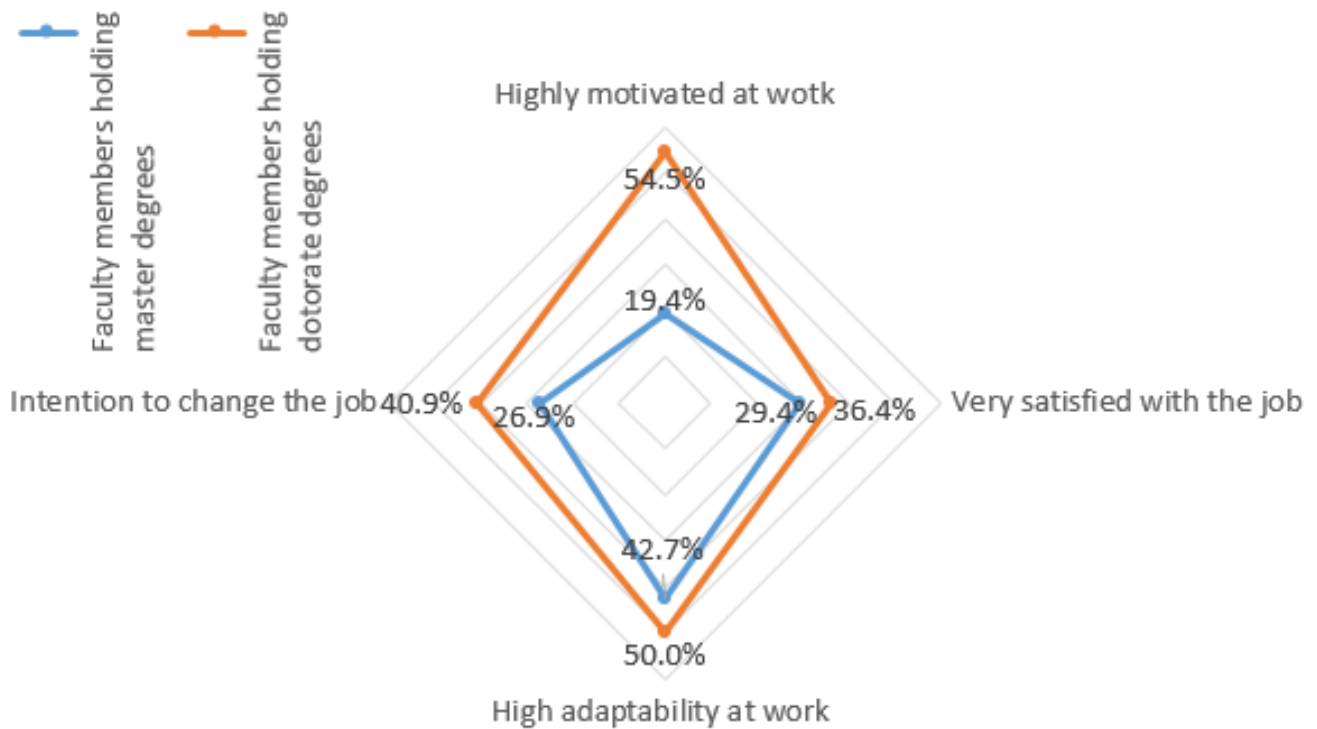
More male faculty members (27.7%) were highly motivated than female faculty members(15.5%) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Work motivation of the female and male faculty members



More than half of the faculty members holding doctor degrees (54.55%) had high work motivation while less than a fifth of the faculty members holding master degrees (19.4%) did (see Figure 4). The disparities were explained by schools administrators in the unstructured interviews that “the doctor faculty members were more trusted to deliver quality training for local officials in the current challenging context”.

Figure 4: Work motivation of the faculty members holding doctor degrees and the faculty members holding master degrees



Factors influencing work motivation of faculty

Concerning the work factor, t-test ($\text{sig} < 0.05$) showed that the surveyed faculty members valued the influence of the work itself to their work motivation higher than school administrators did (see Table 2A.) Concerning the faculty member factors, t-test ($\text{sig} < 0.05$) revealed that the male faculty member was more motivated by the faculty member factors, that means being interested in the job, opportunity for advancement, and recognition from the organization than the female faculty; ANOVA test ($\text{sig} < 0.05$) revealed that doctor faculty member was more motivated by the faculty member factors than the other two groups of master faculty member and bachelor faculty.

Incentives and behaviour were rated the highest among the maintenance factors/organization factors and among all factors under examination influencing work motivation of the faculty member of the school of politics (see Table 2B in the Appendix). The next highest were the factors of support from school leaders, management of the heads of units, and school leadership, which were all related to leadership skills concerning the department and organization levels. Notably, the least valued maintenance factor was personnel policy which was the third least valued among all factors.

Interest in the job was the motivator which rated the highest and the second highest among all factors. The next highest motivators were meaningful job and recognition of the organization and peers, which were different in value of only 0.02 point. Challenging job and opportunity for advancement were the least valued among all factors.

Factors influencing the creating of work motivation of the faculty

Factors influencing the creating of work motivation of the faculty members were grouped into faculty member factors or subjective factors and organization environment factors or objective factors. Respondents rated faculty member factors/ subjective factors mostly influential in creating work motivation of the faculty members in PSP (see Table 4A & Table 4B in the Appendix). T-test showed that there was statistical difference in means ($\text{sig} < 0.05$) between school administrators and faculty members, between male faculty members and female faculty members while ANOVA revealed no difference ($\text{sig} > 0.05$) among the groups of bachelor, master, and doctor faculty members. The surveyed faculty members rated thinking positively was the most influencing among the examined factors of creating work motivation which was followed by the factor of overcoming difficulties (see Table 1 in the Appendix). The factors of making detailed plans for the set objectives and setting goals for personal development got nearly the same values in terms of influencing work motivation of the faculty members and were the third and the fourth highest values respectively. It was further explained by a male faculty member in an unstructured interview that faculty members defined their objectives in respective periods and worked hard to overcome difficulties to meet these objectives and to reach the current status. Another explanation was found in an interview with a female faculty member that the achievements at work much depended on personal strive to meet their defined objectives besides the opportunities provided by the school.

Thinking positively, overcoming difficulties, setting new challenges to overcome, valuing job achievements, recognizing job progress, setting goals for personal development, making detailed plans for the set objectives, and mobilizing job resources motivated female faculty members more than male faculty.

Organization environment factors or objective factors were rated mostly influencing the creation of work environment of the faculty members in the provincial political schools (see Table 5 A & Table 5B). There was statistical difference in means ($\text{sig} < 0.05$) between school administrators and faculty, between male faculty and female faculty members among the groups of bachelor, master, and doctor faculty members. Existing regulations on PSP was rated as the highest and impacts of international integration as the least influencing factors in creating work motivation for the faculty members.

School administrators rated the factor of existing regulation on provincial schools of politics as the most influencing factor in creating work motivation for the faculty, which was understandable when administrators were likely to incline to the regulation compliance in their management activities, e.g. in motivating people in their organization. As the key actor of the training, faculty members valued the training programs as the most influencing factor in creating their work motivation. Interestingly, doctoral faculty member rated all the factors higher influencing the creation of work motivation than the other two groups of bachelor and master faculty.

Considering the correlation between the faculty member factors or subjective factors and the organization environment or objective factors ($r = 0.546^{**}$, $\text{sig.} = .000$) indicated that a significant and positive relationship between these factors (see Table 5C).

Discussion

Faculty members in PSP was fairly motivated when more than a half of them were fairly satisfied and exceeded the expected task performance, their task implementation was rated fairly effective, and nearly half of them had high adaptation at work and four fifths did not want to change their job. The result was in agreement with the motivation theory that work motivation was expressed through a person's job satisfaction, task performance, adaptation at work, effective task implementation, and retention.

The case showed evidence that male faculty members were more motivated than female faculties in terms of expressions of the work motivation. The reason of the difference in motivation between male and female faculties in PSP should be further studied, which would help work out to remove this disparity.

The faculty members holding doctorate degrees were more motivated than the other non-doctor degree-holder faculty members when they were capable to deliver quality training. Performance was viewed as a joint function of abilities and motivation (Kanfer, 1992); thus, in order to increase employee's performance to meet the demanding tasks, given limited resources, available capable persons would be selected and motivated to fulfill the tasks.

The faculty members and organization factors were positively influencing the creation of work motivator for faculty member. At the broad level, an individual's motivation for a job is determined by environment (Kanfer, 1992, p. 3). Organization factors should not only restrict to the organization itself, rather extend to organization environment, especially when things are changing more constantly, rapidly, unpredictably and the inclusiveness and participation values affect the governance of the organization.

Disparity in motivation among the different groups within an organization should be dealt with in order to improve productivity and performance. Further research on the disparity and how to narrow the disparity to improve motivation of employees is needed.

Conclusion

Work motivation has been always a concern of an organization, especially public organizations which operate with scarce resources to create public values and achieve ultimate goals of well-being of the citizens. The paper described the case of motivation of the faculty members in PSP in Viet Nam, who play a key role in strengthening capacity for local officials to serve the citizens better and promote local governance. The case study revealed that faculty members were not highly motivated and the most influencing factors in creating work motivation were the faculty members themselves as intrinsic factors. It is crucial to motivate them to improve their teaching performance which contributes to the enhancement of capacity of local officials who, in their turn, strengthen participation, inclusiveness to ensure local development and local governance. Further studies to identify the measure to motivate the faculty members should be promoted.

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